

### What's a thesis?

- A statement supported by arguments
- A position that you will prove with evidence

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What you plan to prove

+ How you plan to prove it

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= A Thesis

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### A thesis answers questions

- Why? (Why did a person or group act in a particular way? What was the motivation?)
- Which one? (Which is a better choice, and why?)
- What if? (If one event had gone differently, how would it have affected other events?)

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- How? (How did one event—or series of events —lead to another? How did one person affect the outcome of an event?)
- So what? (Why was this important? How did it change the future? How does it still affect us today?)

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### What a thesis is not

- A summary or list of events
  - The Confederate soldiers gave up their weapons after General Lee surrendered to General Grant).
- A statement of the obvious
  - The Civil War demonstrated that war could be very bloody.
- Overly general
  - The U.S. Civil War was a conflict between the North and the South

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### A successful thesis

- Is specific
- Addresses a potential contradiction, and is arguable
- Provides a logical way to structure the argument

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